

Something in a Name. *Denver Times 2/10/22*

In the 1921 edition of the United States geological survey map of the Leadville quadrangle the name "Gannett peak" has been bestowed by the government department upon the highest point of Mount Massive, while the name "Massive" is retained only for the lower portion of the historic eminence which has long been famous as the highest mountain in Colorado.

The Colorado Mountain club has rightly addressed a letter to the headquarters of the survey department, asking those in charge why they have presumed to make this change in an old and familiar name without even consulting the wishes of the people of this state.

"If the intention be to honor Mr. Gannett," reads the query, "why pick on a mountain that has long borne a suitable and satisfactory name? Is your board not aware that there are scores of majestic peaks in this state still unnamed? Are mountains such as those named for Pike, Long, Sherman and Lincoln unsuited to bear Mr. Gannett's name? In renaming this grand old mountain was the Colorado geographic board consulted? If not, why not? Was any effort whatever made to learn the wishes of the people of Colorado? The 1,100 members of the Colorado Mountain club have their attention fixed on this and your reply will have the widest publicity among them as well as thruout the state."

The naming of Colorado peaks is more than an academic question. To those who frequent the outdoors and make themselves familiar with the physical contours of our imposing mountains by actual contact, the great peaks of the state possess personality. Particularly is this so when for a long period of years they have borne names which are known to all Coloradans and have been accepted without criticism or dissent.

It is, therefore, an unwarranted presumption for government officials in Washington in their desire to honor a man who had distinguished himself in the geographic service, to affix his name to the highest mountain in this state without as much as a by-your-leave. That much honor is due Mr. Gannett none will deny; but we do deny the right of any governmental bureau to ignore deliberately not only the desires of the people, but the historical records of Colorado, by changing names at will and selecting at their own convenience and for their own pet reasons such well-known peaks as Mount Massive for their scrambling of titles.

The Colorado Mountain club has already done the state a service by calling attention to a large number of duplications in the names of Colorado peaks. We have in existence a state geographic board, but it is without backing or funds. Were it to be authorized by the legislature to look into this matter and rename those mountains which have duplicate or meaningless titles, the work would have official sanction and the results would be permanent. Certain it is that no amount of government propaganda will suffice to change the name of Mount Massive to Gannett peak. Mount Massive it has been, Mount Massive it is and Mount Massive it will remain, so far as the people of Colorado are concerned.

The United States geographic board in our opinion has just as much right to change arbitrarily the names of our own mountains as they have to change the name of Sixteenth street or the name of Denver itself. Mr. Shakespeare to the contrary notwithstanding, there's something in a name.